



The President's Daily Brief

19 March 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Peking has issued its strongest anti-Soviet polemical blast in nearly a year in anticipation of the Soviet party congress opening. (Page 1)

Problems in the Communist Chinese leadership are assessed on Page 2.

A leftist group in Turkey may try to kidnap a diplomat as hostage for the release of a terrorist leader. (Page 3)

Five Soviet diplomats [] have been declared persona non grata in Mexico. (Page 3)

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COMMUNIST CHINA - SOVIET UNION

A joint editorial by the major Chinese propaganda organs, essentially restating the ideological differences that divide the two parties, is the strongest anti-Soviet polemical blast in nearly a year. It appears designed to drive home the point that, despite recent improvements in state-to-state relations, the fundamental gulf between Peking and Moscow remains as wide as ever. The Chinese clearly wish to set the record straight on this score before the Soviet party congress begins on 30 March; in a sense the editorial can be viewed as Peking's reply to the reported invitation from Moscow to attend the conclave.

In comparing Chinese adherence to "revolutionary violence" with Soviet "revisionism," the editorial accuses Moscow of going "all out" in the arms race while oppressing people at home and abroad, and repeatedly denounces Brezhnev by name. Nevertheless, specific grievances against Moscow such as the putative Soviet "threat" to Chinese territory are not stressed, presumably because the occasion calls for a more ideological statement of the Chinese position. Indeed, the editorial appears to have been drafted with a view to avoiding as much as possible language that would hamper Peking's diplomatic offensive in both the Communist and non-Communist world. This approach is particularly evident in the handling of Moscow's policies toward Eastern Europe.

Like the classic anti-Soviet blasts of the early and mid-60s, this attack on the "revisionists" has domestic as well as international implications. The editorial dwells at length on themes that were prominent at the height of the Cultural Revolution, particularly on the necessity for continued "class struggle." In this respect, Peking seems to be warning cadres at home against the sins of complacency and bureaucratic rote.



The shadowy Chen Po-ta, longtime ghostwriter, propagandist, and ideologue for Mao, had been chief of the Cultural Revolution Group since its formation in the fall of 1966. Deriving his political stature solely from close association with Mao, Chen had generally been found on the radical side of controversies at the center.



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Kang Sheng, the former chief of the secret police, had been "adviser" to the Cultural Revolution Group from its inception. This title and his extreme [redacted] statements painted Kang as one of the prime movers behind the destructive radical impulses of the Cultural Revolution.

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COMMUNIST CHINA

On 2 December last year, we reported infighting within the Chinese politburo, origins of which probably dated back to the Cultural Revolution and allegedly involved an attempt by members of the politburo to discredit an ultraleftist Red Guard organization and other members who supported it. We noted that the result of the infighting could prove embarrassing particularly to Kang Sheng and Chen Po-ta.

Kang has now been out of public view for four months, and a story is circulating in Peking that at a party plenum late last summer he and Chen, and to a lesser extent Madame Mao, were criticized for "extremist" activities during and since the Cultural Revolution. Chen has been out of sight since 1 August, and it would appear that both he and Kang have been sidelined or purged.

The issues in dispute are extremely complex, but it seems safe to assume that the fate of the fallen politburo members is linked to quarreling over post - Cultural Revolution reconstruction policies and perhaps over the shape of China's rebuilt party and government apparatus, now heavily dominated by regional military leaders and veteran party cadres. Criticism of this revamped apparatus by Chen and Kang may have pushed some of their colleagues on the politburo to coalesce against them.

Whatever the case, the balance of forces in Peking's unstable leadership coalition seems to have shifted considerably since last fall, and the political setbacks suffered by Chen and Kang cast serious doubt on the future prospects of other leaders who were associated with the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. The heavy criticism in domestic propaganda of the political performance of senior military and civilian officials continues to suggest that whatever issues are troubling the politburo have not been resolved. Moreover, the regime's failure since last March to acknowledge publicly any of the breaks that have occurred in the ranks of the top leadership indicates that a covert power struggle of significant proportions is still being waged in Peking.

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NOTES

Turkey:

[redacted] the leftist Revolutionary Youth Federation may soon try to kidnap a diplomat or a member of his family as a hostage for the release of terrorist leader Deniz Gezmiş. Gezmiş, who as the self-styled leader of the embryonic Turkish People's Liberation Army engineered the earlier kidnappings of Americans, was captured last Wednesday as he tried to escape to Syria. Another member of the gang was also captured after being seriously wounded, and two others are still at large.

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Mexico: In The President's Daily Brief of 18 March, we reported that the discovery of the Mexican guerrilla group trained in North Korea could have an effect on the Echeverria administration's attitude toward activities of Communist diplomats. Yesterday the Soviet chargé d'affaires and four other diplomats in the embassy [redacted] were declared persona non grata. Although Moscow had relatively minor contact with the revolutionaries, [redacted] these "diplomats" made them ideal targets for a display of Mexican displeasure.

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